

From: Joanna
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/28/02 6:20pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

January 27, 2002

Attorney General John Ashcroft
US Department of Justice, 950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Mr. Ashcroft:

I am acutely dismayed that our government has decided to insert itself into the affairs of private businesses. I do not believe it is the responsibility of the government to regulate business. The Microsoft antitrust case is just another example of the state pandering to petulance. Companies can and should have the ability to stand on their own feet. I am disgusted that every time a conflict arises in business, it is acceptable to run to the government for protection instead of toughening up. This whole suit has been a colossal waste of time and money not only on the part of the government, but on Microsoft's part as well. They should have been putting their resources towards innovation, not litigation. I believe the government should back off in this case. There is absolutely no need to federalize what is simply the inability of companies to take their licks and keep moving in a fiercely competitive atmosphere.

I do not claim that Bill Gates is a saint. He is a tough competitor, and I understand how companies can feel daunted by Microsoft's prowess in the market. But I believe consumers are able to judge for themselves what is good and what is not, and are capable of regulating big business through purchase and support of products. The government has no right to take that privilege away from consumers. The settlement requires Microsoft to disclose source code from its Windows operating system, allowing competitors the ability to work within Microsoft's operating system instead of having to develop a quality operating system on their own. It also requires Microsoft to refrain from retaliation when software is put on the market that directly competes with Microsoft software, but this just makes companies weaker by reducing the severity of competition in the market. Restrictions breed contempt, and contempt is not productive. F.A. Harper* wrote, "Human goodness can only grow in a climate of liberty." If liberty is removed from the technology market, the government cannot expect goodness to remain.

The companies and states who are continuing to pursue litigation are opportunists. They are the result of an education system that has indoctrinated them to believe that it is acceptable to steal from one's neighbor as long as one has the government do it for them. They take privileges for granted and claim them as rights. It is nothing but political whoring. It is wrong. The litigation needs to stop now, before this kind of behavior is reinforced any longer. It is a total waste of creative and productive energy -- and of the resources that would otherwise support these essential elements of a health economy and prosperous society.

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Sincerely,

Joanna Parker

*F.A. Harper was a revered scholar and founder of the Institute of Humane Studies, which still continues at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia.

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